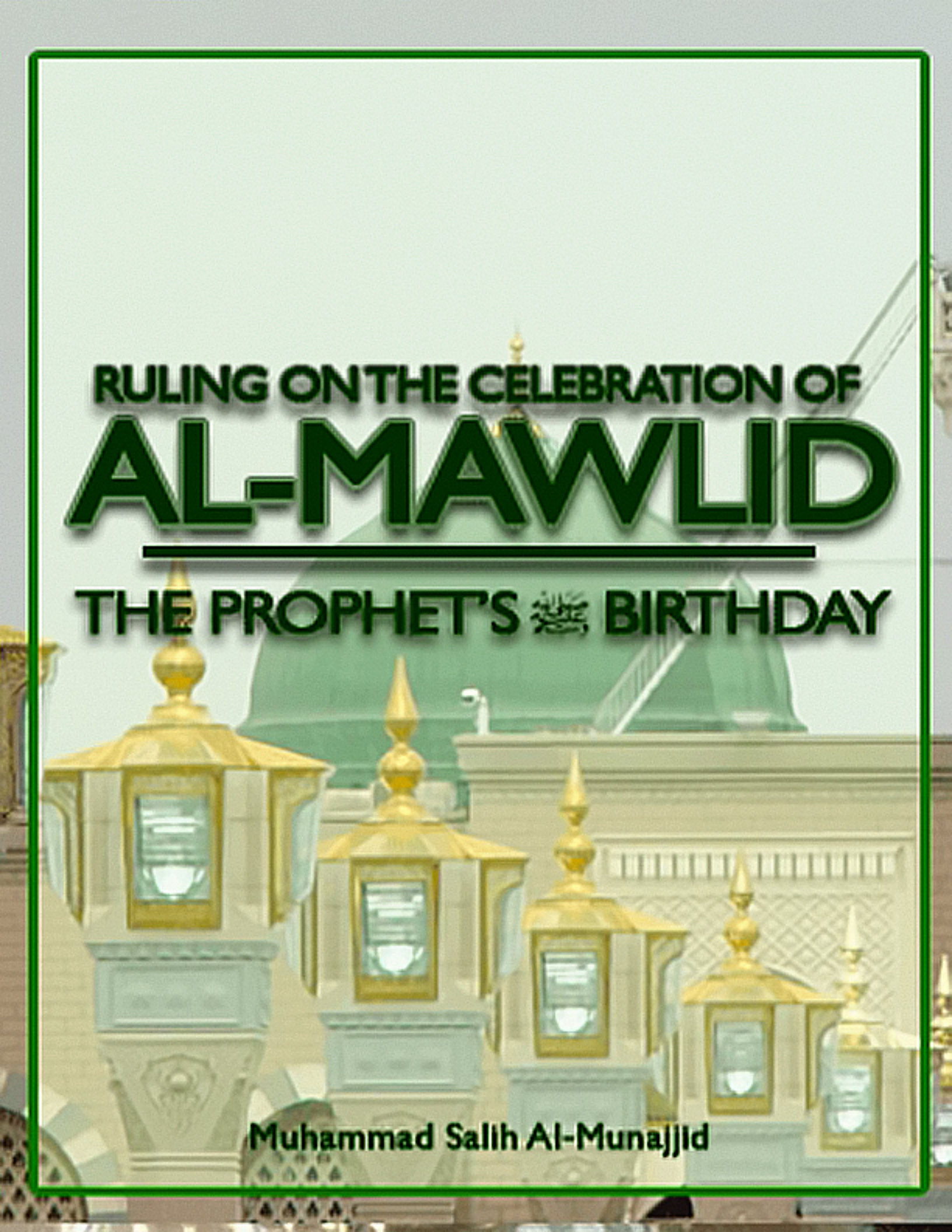
RULING ON THE CELEBRATION OF AL-MAWLID

THE PROPHET'S ﷺ BIRTHDAY



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بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَـٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ

Bismi Allahi Alrrahmani Alrraheemi

In the name of Allah, the most Beneficent, the most Merciful

Ruling on the celebration of al-Mawlid (the Prophet's Birthday)

Praise be to Allaah, alone, and peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allaah, his family, his companions, and whoever follows his guidance.

Many people have asked about the ruling concerning celebrating the birthday of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), standing up for him, sending salaam (greetings) upon him and reading soorahs from the Qur'aan during such celebrations, holding gatherings of *dhikr*, doing various things to show their joy, reciting *qaseedahs* and poems, and other things that are done to commemorate "Mawlid" which many people celebrate on the 12th day of Rabee' al-Awwal each Hijri year.

The answer is that it is not permitted to celebrate the birthday of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), or the birthday of any other person, because this is a matter that has been innovated in the religion. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did not do this, neither did his successors, the Rightly-Guided Khaleefahs (*al-khulafaa' al-raashidoon*), or others among his Companions (may Allaah be pleased with them), or those who followed them exactly (in faith) during the best centuries – these are the people who had the best knowledge of the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), who loved him the most and followed the sharee'ah most perfectly, better than any who came after them. It is proven that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Whoever innovates something in this matter of ours (i.e., Islam), will have it rejected" i.e., it will be thrown back at him. In another hadeeth, he said: "I advise you to adhere to my sunnah and the way of the rightly-guided successors (*al-khulafaa' al-raashidoon*) who will come after me, and to cling stubbornly to it. Beware of newly-invented things (in religion), for every newly-invented thing is an innovation and every innovation is a going astray." These two ahaadeeth contain a very stern warning against coming up with innovations (bid'ah) and acting on them. Allaah says in His clear Book (interpretation of the meaning) :

> *"… And whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it, and whatsoever he forbids you,*

abstain from it…" [al-Hashr 59:7]

"… And let those who oppose the Messenger's commandment beware, lest some fitnah (disbelief, trials, afflictions, etc.) befall them, or a painful torment be inflicted on them." [al-Noor 24:63]

"Indeed in the Messenger of Allaah you have a good example to follow for him who hopes in (the Meeting with) Allaah and the Last Day and remembers Allaah much." [al-Ahzaab 33:21]

"And the first to embrace Islam of the muhaajiroon (those who migrated to Madeenah from Makkah) and the Ansaar (the citizens of Madeenah who helped and gave aid to the muhaajiroon), and also those who followed them exactly (in Faith). Allaah is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him. He has prepared for them Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise), to dwell therein forever. That is the supreme success." [al-Tawbah 9:100]

"… This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion…" [al-Maa'idah 5:3]

There are many other aayaat which convey the same meaning. Innovating things like "Mawlid" could be interpreted as meaning that Allaah did not complete the religion for this ummah, that the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) failed to convey to this ummah all that they should do, until those people came along later and innovated in the religion things that Allaah had not permitted, claiming that these were things that would bring them closer to Allaah. Without a doubt, this is a very serious matter, which indicates opposition and resistance towards Allaah and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). Allaah has perfected the religion for His slaves and completed His favour upon them. The Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) has conveyed the Message clearly, and there is no way of reaching Paradise and avoiding Hell that he has not explained to his ummah,

as is clear from the saheeh hadeeth narrated by 'Abd-Allaah ibn 'Amr (may Allaah be pleased with them both), in which the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Allaah has not sent any prophet but it was his duty to point out to his ummah the best of what he knew, and to warn them against the worst of what he knows." (Reported by Muslim in his *Saheeh*). It is well known that our Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is the best and the Seal of the Prophets, the most eloquent and the most sincere in advice. If celebrating his birthday had been a part of the religion which Allaah liked, His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) would have told his ummah about it, and he would have done it during his lifetime, or his Companions would have done it. Since nothing of the sort happened, we know that this is not part of Islam at all, rather it is one of the innovations about which the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) warned his ummah, as stated in the two ahaadeeth quoted above. Other ahaadeeth also convey the same meaning, such as the words spoken by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) in his Friday sermons: "… The best of speech is the Book of Allaah and the best of guidance is the guidance of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). The most evil of things are those which are newly-invented (in religion), and every innovation is a going astray." (Reported by Imaam Muslim in his *Saheeh*).

There are many aayaat and ahaadeeth which say the same thing. A group of scholars have condemned the practice of celebrating the Prophet's birthday and warned against it, in accordance with the evidence quoted above and other texts. Some of the later scholars went against this and allowed these celebrations as long as they did not involve anything forbidden such as exaggerating about the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), mixing between men and women, musical instruments, etc. They thought that this was a kind of "*bid'ah hasanah* (good innovation)". But the rule is to refer disputed matters to the Book of Allaah and the Sunnah of His Messenger Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), as Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

> *"O you who believe! Obey Allaah and obey the Messenger, and those of you (Muslims) who are in authority. (And) if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allaah and His Messenger, if you believe in Allaah and in the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination."* [al-

Nisaa' 4:59]

So, let us refer this matter, celebrating the birthday of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), to the Book of Allaah. We find that the Qur'aan commands us to follow the Messenger in that which he has brought to us, and warns us to shun that which he has forbidden, and it tells us that the religion (Islam) has been completed and perfected for this ummah. This celebration is not a part of that which the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) brought, so it is not a part of this religion which Allaah has perfected for us and in which He has commanded us to follow his Messenger. Let us also refer this matter to the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him): we will find that he did not do this, or command others to do it, and his Companions (may Allaah be pleased with them) did not do it either. So it is not part of the religion; it is a newly-invented innovation, and an imitation of the Jews and Christians in their festivals. So it should be clear to anyone who has the slightest common sense, sincere desire for the truth and open-mindedness, that celebrating the birthday of the Prophet is not a part of Islam; it is an innovation, which Allaah and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) warned us against and told us to shun. A wise person should not be swayed by the fact that so many people all over the world do this. Truth is not known by how many people follow it; it is known through the evidence of sharee'ah, as Allaah says of the Jews and Christians (interpretation of the meaning):

> *"And they say: 'None shall enter Paradise unless he be a Jew or a Christian.' These are their own desires. Say: 'Produce your proof, if you are truthful.'"* [al-Baqarah 2:111]

> *"And if you obey most of those on earth, they will mislead you far away from Allaah's path. They follow nothing but conjectures, and they do nothing but lie."* [al-An'aam 6:116]

Most of these mawlid celebrations, besides being bid'ah, are also not free from other sinful practices, such as the mixing of men and women, use of songs and musical instruments, consumption of alcohol and other intoxicants, and other evils. They could even involve something worse, which is *al-shirk al-akbar*, in the form of exaggeration about the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) or other *awliyaa'* (so-called "saints"). They may even pray to him, calling out for his help and support, claiming that he

knows the Unseen, and other forms of kufr which many people indulge in when they celebrate the birthday of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) or others whom they call *awliyaa'*.

In a saheeh hadeeth, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Beware of going to extremes in religion, for those who came before you were destroyed by their going to extremes in religion." He also said: "Do not exaggerate about me as the Christians exaggerated about the son of Maryam. I am only a slave, so say "the slave and Messenger of Allaah.'" (Reported by al-Bukhaari in his *Saheeh* from the hadeeth of 'Umar, may Allaah be pleased with him). It is most strange indeed that many people make huge efforts to attend these innovated gatherings and to defend them, when they do not do this in the case of the duties that have been enjoined on them like attending *Jumu'ah* (Friday) prayers and prayers in congregation; they do not care about these duties and do not think that they are doing anything wrong. There is no doubt that this is due to weakness of faith, lack of understanding and the effects of sins piling up on one's heart. We ask Allaah to keep us and all the Muslims safe from that.

Some of them think that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) actually attends the mawlid celebration, so they stand up to greet and welcome him. This is a serious falsehood and a form of gross ignorance. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) will not come out of his grave, or contact anybody, or attend any gatherings. He will remain in his grave until the Day of Resurrection, and his soul is in the highest *'Illiyoon* (in Paradise), with his Lord in the abode of honour, as Allaah says in Soorat al-Mu'minoon (interpretation of the meaning): *"After that, surely, you will die. Then (again), surely, you will be resurrected on the Day of Resurrection"* [al-Mu'minoon 23:15].

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "I will be the first whose grave will be opened on the Day of Resurrection, and I will be the first to intercede and the first to be asked to intercede." May Allaah bless him and grant him peace. This aayah and hadeeth, and others that say the same thing, all indicate that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and everyone else who has died will only emerge from their graves on the Day of Resurrection. This is something on which all the Muslim scholars agree; there is no controversy here. Every Muslim should pay attention to these matters and be careful to avoid the innovations and illusions introduced with no authority from

Allaah by those who are ignorant. Allaah is the One whom we ask for help, and in Him we put our trust. There is no power and no strength except with Him.

Sending prayers and blessings upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is one of the righteous deeds that bring a person closer to Allaah, as Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): *"Allaah sends His Salaat (blessings, etc.) on the Prophet and His angels also (ask Allaah to bless and forgive him). O you who believe! Send your salaat on him (ask Allaah to bless him) and greet him with the Islamic way of greeting (i.e., al-salaamu 'alaykum)."* [al-Ahzaab 33:56]

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Whoever sends one blessing on me, Allaah will send ten on him." This sending of blessings is recommended on all occasions, and is prescribed at the end of every prayer – indeed, according to all scholars, it is obligatory in the final *tashahhud* of every salaah (prayer), and it is *sunnah mu'akkadah* (confirmed sunnah) on a number of other occasions, such as after the adhaan, when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is mentioned, and during the day and night of Jumu'ah (i.e. from maghrib on Thursday until maghrib on Friday), as is indicated in a number of ahaadeeth.

We ask Allaah to help us and all the Muslims to understand His religion and adhere to it, to bless us all by making us follow the Sunnah, and to protect us from bid'ah, for He is the Most Kind and Generous. May Allaah bless our Prophet Muhammad, and his family and companions.

Is Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) created from light? What is wrong with celebrating his birthday?

> In our locality there are people who hold celebrations of the birthday of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) every year. They think that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is not like the rest of mankind, but that he is light from the Light of Allaah Himself, that he is present and watching in every place, and that he himself attends every gathering held to celebrate his birthday, he hears what the people say about him, and he is there with them. For

that reason they stand up and say in unison: *"Yaa Nabi-Allaah, yaa Rasool-Allaah, yaa Habeeb-Allaah, salaam 'alayka* (O Prophet of Allaah, O Messenger of Allaah, O Beloved of Allaah, peace be upon you)." They call out to him as if he were present and ask for his help and support. What is the Islamic ruling on this? Is it correct or not? Is it sunnah, bid'ah, or what?

Praise be to Allaah alone, and peace and blessings be upon His Messenger and his family and companions.

1. Celebrating the birthday of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is an innovation (*bid'ah*) which goes against the guidance of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and of the Rightly Guided Khaleefahs (*al-khulafaa' al-raashidoon*) and the Sahaabah, may Allaah be pleased with them. It is proven that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Whoever does anything that is not part of this matter of ours (i.e., Islam), will have it rejected." (For more details, please see Question 2 below).
2. Believing that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is not like the rest of humanity, and that he is light from the Light of Allaah Himself is not a correct belief, because it contradicts the Qur'aan. Allaah has stated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is human, and has explained what makes the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) different from the rest of mankind. He said (interpretation of the meaning):

 "Say (O Muhammad): 'I am only a man like you. It has been inspired to me that your God is One God (Allaah). So whoever hopes for the Meeting with his Lord, let him work righteousness and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord." [al-Kahf 18:110]

 Mankind, human beings, are created, as Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

 "O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person (Adam), and from him He created his wife (Hawwa/Eve), and from them both He created many men and women…" [al-Nisaa' 4:1]

 "O mankind, if you are in doubt about the Resurrection, then

verily! We have created you from dust, then from a nutfah (mixed drops of male and female sexual discharge)…" [al-Hajj 22:5]

"O Prophet! Verily, We have sent you as witness, and a bearer of glad tidings, and a warner, - and as one who invites to Allaah by His leave, and as a lamp spreading light." [al-Ahzaab 33:45-46]

In contrast, Allaah is the First, and He has no beginning, as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

"He is the First (nothing is before Him) and the Last (nothing is after Him), the Most High (nothing is above Him), and the Most Near (nothing is nearer than Him). And He is the All-Knower of every thing." [al-Hadeed 57:3]

Allaah called His Prophet "light" and a "lamp spreading light" because of the guidance and light with which Allaah sent him, with which Allaah guides all those who answer his call (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

"… Indeed, there has come to you a light (Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)) and a plain Book (this Qur'aan)." [al-Maa'idah 5:15]

3. Saying that he is present and watching in every place, that he is himself present at every gathering to celebrate his birthday, and that he hears what the people present are saying, is all false. There is no basis for this in either the Qur'aan or the Sunnah.
4. Calling on him and seeking his help and support is a form of major shirk which is not permitted, whether one is calling on the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) or on any other created being, because Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

> *"… so invoke not anyone along with Allaah." [al-Junn 72:18]*
>
> *"And whoever invokes (or worships) besides Allaah, any other god of whom he has no proof, then his reckoning is only with his Lord. Surely! Al-kaafiroon (the disbelievers)*

will not be successful." [al-Mu'minoon 23:117]

(*Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah*, 3/4)

The Muslim should follow, not innovate. He should believe in Allaah alone, call on Him alone and seek His help alone. He should not call on or seek the help of anyone else. The consequences of shirk are devastating, as it will wipe out all a person's good deeds and lead to his doom in Hell. Bid'ah is a serious matter, which will cause a person's deeds to be thrown back at him, not accepted. The Muslim should love, respect, honour and obey the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and give his words precedence over the words of any other human being, but it is not permitted to exaggerate about him, or to raise his status above that which has been bestowed upon him by Allaah, or to call on him instead of Allaah, because this is a violation of the rights of Allaah, and involves directing acts of worship to someone other than Allaah, when they should only be directed towards Allaah, may He be glorified and exalted. We ask Allaah to help us to do that which will please Him and to avoid that which will earn His wrath, and to help us to love Him and His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). May Allaah bless our Prophet Muhammad. And Allaah knows best.

Question 2

Mawlid al-Nabi (the Prophet's birthday)

Why some people accept and some unaccept the celebration of the prophet (s.a.w.)? What is your opinion?

Praise be to Allaah.

There is nothing in the Qur'aan to say that we should celebrate the Mawlid or birthday of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). The Prophet himself (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did not do this or command anyone to do it, either during his lifetime or after his death. Indeed, he told them not to exaggerate about him as the Christians had exaggerated about Jesus (upon whom be peace). He said: "Do not exaggerate about me as the Christians exaggerated about the son of Maryam. I am only a slave, so say, 'The slave of Allaah and His Messenger.'" (Reported by al-Bukhaari). What has been reported is that the Prophet (peace

and blessings of Allaah be upon him) made the day of his birth a day of worship, which is different to celebration. He was asked about fasting on Mondays, and he said: "That is the day on which I was born and the day on which I was entrusted with the Mission or when I was first given Revelation." (Reported by Muslim, al-Nisaa'i and Abu Dawood).

Moreover, we know that the Sahaabah (may Allaah be pleased with them) were the people who loved the Prophet most. Was it reported that Abu Bakr, who was the closest of people to him and the one who loved him the most, celebrated the birthday of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)? Was it reported that 'Umar, who ruled for twelve years, or 'Uthmaan, did this? Was it reported that 'Ali, his relative and foster son, did this? Was it reported that any of the Sahaabah did this? No, by Allaah! Is it because they were not aware of its importance, or did they not truly love the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)? No one would say such a thing except one who has gone astray and is leading others astray.

Did any of the imaams – Abu Haneefah, Maalik, al-Shaafi'i, Ahmad, al-Hasan al-Basri, Ibn Seereen – do this or command others to do it or say that it was good? By Allaah, no! It was not even mentioned during the first and best three centuries. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said in a saheeh hadeeth: "The best of mankind are my generation (or my century), then those who come after them, then those who come after them. Then there will come a people who will not care if their testimony comes before their oath or vice versa (i.e., they will not take such matter seriously)." (Reported by al-Bukhaari, Muslim and al-Tirmidhi). The celebration of the Prophet's birthday appeared many centuries later, when many of the features of true religion had vanished and bid'ah had become widespread.

Thus this celebration became a sign of one's love for the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)? But can it be possible that the Sahaabah, the imaams and the people of the best three centuries were unaware of it, and it was only those who came later who were aware of its importance?! What the Qur'aan tells us is that love of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is demonstrated by following the guidance he brought. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"Say (O Muhammad): 'If you (really) love Allaah, then follow me, Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allaah is Oft-

Forgiving, Most Merciful.

Say: 'Obey Allaah and the Messenger.' But if they turn away, then Allaah does not like the disbelievers." [Aal 'Imraan 3:31-32]

The first aayah explains that love is just a claim, but the proof of sincerity is following what the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) brought. The second aayah reaffirms the importance and necessity of obeying Allaah and His Messenger. Hence Allaah ended the aayah with a very stern warning in which those who refuse to obey are described as kaafirs, and Allah does not love the disbelievers. We ask Allaah to keep us safe from that. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) told us of the danger of not obeying him, and the danger of adding to what he brought. The celebration of Mawlid or his birthday is indeed an addition to what he brought – as all the scholars agree. He said: "The best of speech is the Book of Allaah, and the best of guidance is the guidance of Muhammad. The most evil of things are those which are newly-invented (in religion), and every innovation is a going astray." (Reported by Muslim and al-Nisaa'i).

We ask Allaah to protect us from bid'ah and to bless us by helping us to follow. Allaah knows best. May Allaah bless our Prophet Muhammad.
